Workshop Summary:
E-Mental Health

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This workshop explores the potential of digital technology to contribute to mental health and wellbeing, including exploring how user involvement and empowerment approaches can be adopted. It features a number of examples of local multi-partner digital developments.

Keywords: mental health, wellbeing, digital technologies, depression, anxiety, psychosis, mobile apps, youth, Internet

1. AYE MIND – EXPLORING AND DEVELOPING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY FOR YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH (LAKEY)

Aye Mind is an EU-funded collaborative initiative that has been exploring the potential of digital communications technology in the promotion of mental health and wellbeing for and with young people.

Adopting a co-production approach, the initiative has created an overall web platform (www.ayemind.com) bringing together a wide range of the outputs from this work.

These fall into three main categories – a suite of custom-designed digital resources aimed at young people, all involving 13-21 year old youth in their development and refinement.

These include a set of dynamic "listicle"-styled story resources on key aspects of mental health (like dealing with stress, anger management) plus a suite of youth-created animated gif images aimed at opening up dialogue with peers on a wide range of wellbeing related issues.

Other sections of the resource have focused on the needs of professionals, including a comprehensive web-based toolkit to aid youth-related workers make better use of digital assets, plus a curated database of over 60 digital assets from around the world, that show promise in promoting youth mental health and wellbeing.

Dr Lakey's presentation highlighted the positive response from young people and workers alike in being active participants in creating digital assets. He also noted that there is a need to acknowledge and respond to both the negative and positive aspects of the "digital world", and that having lived experiences of young people in this regard is vital. He also summarised learning from youth-related workers (gathered for example from a 390 sample size online survey) on the support they need to make better use of the digital sphere, including better training, technical support, supportive policies and a more innovative, experimental culture.

In conclusion, all involved in the collaboration are clear that digital resources and methods can play a significant part in supporting young people's mental health and wellbeing, within the context of a much wider range of responses being provided.

Additionally, they should not be a substitute for face-to-face support where this is desired, and that young people themselves should be supported to be active co-creators and users of technology, not just passive recipients.

Core Aye Mind partners include: NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Snook, Young Scot, Mental Health Foundation, Powered by Coffee, young people and local youth agencies.

2. HOW DO YOU FIND A GOOD APP? CONNECTING YOUTH WITH APPROPRIATE E-MENTAL HEALTH TOOLS (PENNINGTON)

A range of youth e-mental health support exists online, but it is difficult for youth to know what is available or how to find it. The support can take several forms, including a page of text to read, quizzes to evaluate their concerns, online chat with a counsellor or volunteer, personal stories from others with mental health issues, interactive games, awareness on social media, and apps that feature assistance such as mood tracking or meditation.

Kenny et al. (2016) found that youth stated the following needs for mental health mobile technologies: safety, engagement, functionality, social interaction, promoting awareness, accessibility, gender sensitivity, and ensuring users are in control. In a study of e-mental health use among university students, women used it more than men did, and 78% did not trust what they found. They felt e-mental health made it easy to access significant amounts of information, but that it could be unreliable (Montagni et al., 2016).

The presenter's previous research has found that young people typically start looking for e-mental health information using a Google search. They prefer interactive rather than static such as forums, quizzes for lighter topics, engaging games, and chatting or texting with a counsellor (Neal et al., 2011; Rasmussen Pennington et al., 2013). One consideration is how internet content makes people feel emotionally (Rasmussen Pennington, 2016).

Ongoing considerations for future research include how to overcome barriers to youth accessing e-mental health, such as findability through search engines, awareness of available resources, and the creating resources that are engaging as well as reliable.

3. ASSETS IN ACTION (MCBRIDE AND CAMERON)

Assets in Action was a Scottish Government funded partnership led by East Dunbartonshire CHP, East Dunbartonshire Council, Third Sector organisations, volunteers and IRISS to support the implementation of an assets-based model in community mental health (and wider) services.

Communities across East Dunbartonshire worked with the project to identify local assets that support wellbeing in their area, producing an on-line East Dunbartonshire Community Asset Map. Local people have ownership of the map whereby they can also add their own community asset.

The project also created (WITTY), a wellbeing app for iPad in partnership with mental health service users and practitioners to help individuals understand the positive assets and factors which they have and can better use in their day-to-day life.

This approach aimed to create a shift towards a strength based model of supporting individuals' self-efficacy in identifying and utilising both personal and local assets. The aim was also to improve patients' experience of accessing support in the community through practitioners focusing on strengths and identifying personalised options. This is the only example in the UK where both personal and community assets approaches have been combined to support the self-management of LTC.

The East Dunbartonshire Community Asset Map is located at http://www.eastdunassets.org.uk/.

The Personal Asset App can be downloaded free for Apple devices from http://appstore.com/witty. The Android version is available at http://content.iriss.org.uk/witty/.

The project evaluation is available at http://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/social-assets-action-evaluation-report.

4. MOBILE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT WELLBEING AND IDENTIFY EARLY WARNING SIGNS IN PSYCHOSIS (GUMLEY AND BRADSTREET)

EMPOWER (Early Signs Monitoring to Prevent Relapse and PrOmote Wellbeing, Engagement and Recovery) is a three year international research study to design and evaluate a mobile telephone app, with the aim of supporting people with experiences of psychosis to stay well and to reduce the likelihood of relapse.

We anticipate that this will be achieved through the enhancement of early warning signs monitoring and the provision of a stepped care response. This session will introduce the EMPOWER study and app and describe learning from phase 1 of the research as well as wider evidence in relation to the use of mobile health for people with experiences of psychosis.

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